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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to provide an assessment instrument that would serve as an alternative method of documenting the progress of kindergarten students. The portfolio approach to assessment of student progress was implemented in a kindergarten class and applied as an ongoing process. During a 12-week period, teacher and student selected samples of the student's work for the student's portfolio. The teacher also recorded observations and added parental input, audiotapes, photos, and assessment results. Formal and informal conferences between parents, teachers, and students were held as needed, with the portfolio contents used as the basis for addressing strengths and weaknesses of the student. Analysis of the data revealed that the portfolio approach to the assessment of students in a developmentally appropriate kindergarten was a far more positive instrument of evaluation than the report card. Parents indicated that the use of the portfolio approach gave them tangible and visual proof of their children's achievments: an experience that far surpassed that of seeing a letter grade on a report card. (SH)

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A Portfolio Approach to Assessment in a Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten

by

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A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Marian J. King under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

March 1, 1991
Date of Final
Approval of Report

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Abstract

A Portfolio Approach to Assessment in a Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten. King, Marian J., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.

Descriptors: Kindergarten Education/Evaluation/Assessment/ Parent Teacher Conferences/Portfolios/Authentic Assessment/ Developmental Milestones/Anecdotal Records/Ongoing Assessment/Report Cards.

This practicum was designed to provide an assessment instrument as an alternative to the inappropriate use of standardized tests and report card grades to document progress of students enrolled in a developmentally appropriate Kindergarten. A second aim of the practicum was to lead parents to understand and appreciate the value of the portfolio approach to assessment of students' progress.

The writer implemented the portfolio approach to assessment of students' progress in her classroom and applied it as an on-going process during which she held a parent/student/ teacher conference to demonstrate each student's progress. She also participated in devising a district-wide instrument for the assessment of students enrolled in developmentally appropriate Kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Analysis of the data revealed that the portfolio approach to the assessment of students in a developmentally appropriate Kindergarten was a far more positive instrument of evaluation than the commonly used report card. Parents indicated that the use of the portfolio approach gave them tangible and visual proofs of their child's achievements over a period of time, an experience that far surpassed that of a letter grade on a report card.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This pilot program addressed and endeavored to solve an educational problem which is nationwide. Its setting could be any state in the Union or any community in any given state.

The specific setting of this pilot program, however, is a kindergarten classroom in a K-8 public school situated in a predominately agricultural area in a western state. The area has a population of approximately 27,000 and the school district is composed of 13 K-8 schools, one junior high school, and two high schools.

The school where this pilot program was implemented has 881 students and is made up of primarily middle class socio-economic families. Of the 881 students enrolled in the school, 746 are Caucasian, 123 are Hispanic, 6 are African-American, 3 are Asian-American, and 3 are Native American Indian.

Among the minority students, 14 have limited English speaking capabilities. Of the total student population, 75 receive free lunches and 35 receive reduced-price lunches. The school receives funds for the School Improvement Program

(SIP) and also some English as Second Language/Limited English Proficient (ESL/LEP) categorical funds for bilingual education.

The principal, vice-principal, and one administrative intern make up the administrative staff, whereas the teaching staff consists of 34 teachers and 2 resource persons.

Although the school has four kindergarten classes, only one is involved in the pilot program recommended in this study. This kindergarten class at the opening of the school year has 28 students, 13 boys and 15 girls, ages four through six.

The writer of this study is the kindergarten teacher who implemented the pilot program in her classroom. She has been a kindergarten teacher at this school for the past 11 years and was previously teacher/director of a pre-school for 11 years.

She has earned a M.A. in Early Childhood Education, is a lecturer on developmental readiness topics, is a published author on the subject of developmental readiness, has assisted in developing the K-1 assessment tool for the school district as an Early Childhood mentor teacher, and is a member of the California State Department of Education Early Primary Education Leadership Team.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Assessment of the Situation

In 1988, the California State Department of Education (SDE) published the Report of the School Readiness Task Force, Here They Come: Ready or Not. Convened the previous year by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for California, Bill Honig, to examine issues of school readiness and the related development of the Kindergarten child, the 18-member task force recommended:

> That all districts IMMEDIATELY examine how their current kindergarten programs would benefit from an integrated experiential curriculum . . . (which would) maximize the opportunity for each child to participate in activities that are developmentally appropriate to his/her level . . . This can only happen when teachers adapt their classroom approaches to the developmental needs of young children. In addition, the Task Force strongly believes that districts using intelligence or school readiness tests for placement or exclusion of children in their first formal school experience must discontinue this practice in order to avoid tracking of children. (p. viii)
>
> That the assessment of children will be developmentally appropriate. Assessments used by the teacher to plan individualized activities to maximize each child's progress must rely on teacher observation, supplemented by individualized testing only when necessary. (p. ix)
>
> That SDE make a policy recommendation and issue guidelines to all districts to encourage teachers to use alternative means of assessment to individualize instruction and to not use standardized testing for

> placement or exclusion of children, age four through six. (p. 22)
>
> That SDE actively encourage all education programs for children four through six to incorporate an effective parent education program [and] that school districts actively encourage parents to be involved in decisions about curriculum and policy for programs for young children. (p. 29)

The Report of the School Readiness Task Force (1988) was followed a year later by a Program Advisory (1989) issued by State Superintendent Honig, to help educators and administrators in the implementation of the original report. In it the Superintendent restates the recommendations made by the Task Force and makes his own recommendations and suggestions for implementation of the program.

The problem, therefore, faced by the writer's school district and by every teacher of children age four through six is twofold: how to implement an appropriate, integrated, experiential educational program for children age four through six, and how to assess or evaluate the children once the program is in place since standardized tests are not to be used.

To date the school district has been able to implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum or is in the process of doing so. The part of the problem that remained to be solved was that of the assessment of progress of the

children in the program. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, for this school district and this school to find a valid, reliable, and accepted assessment tool to evaluate kindergarteners involved in a developmentally appropriate curriculum, a tool that would be satisfactory to administrators as well as meet the needs of kindergarten teachers.

Documentation of the Problem

In the past this school district had relied on objective, standardized assessments and evaluation practices even for children in kindergarten, first, and second grade. For example, all students in the district in grades kindergarten through eleven were administered the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills annually and the results of this test were used to look at the overall growth of the students as they moved through the system. These scores were also used in the initial placement of students in special programs, to monitor their progress, and for reclassification.

All students in grades kindergarten through eight are administered district-developed, criterion referenced tests in language and math annually. Teachers in grades kindergarten through six also use basic program tests in

reading, math, and language as classroom level tools to assess students' progress in mastering grade level skills. Parents are informed of student progress regularly. Report cards are sent out four times each year and parent conferences are held in grades kindergarten though six at least twice a year.

Briefly stated, the problem facing this school district and the teachers of children age four through six was the lack of appropriate and reliable assessment tools to evaluate students in a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Analysis of the Causes

Kindergarten means "children's garden." Originally it was intended to provide a secure and stimulating environment that encouraged and supported the growth of young children as self-confident and creative individuals. In the 1870's, when the first kindergarten classes were established in this country after the Civil War, the purpose of kindergarten was to build the moral, religious, and social character of the child. Virtues and skills such as industry, neatness, reverence, self-respect, cooperation, and obedience were expected to be the results of a properly directed kindergarten program.

In the early twentieth century along with the continuing secularization and urbanization of the American society, the influence of Freudian psychology gradually changed the concept of early childhood education. Progressive education in kindergarten and early grades had as one of its aims the open and "healthy" expression of feelings and emotions rather than their suppression, which was judged to be "unhealthy." During this time, there was little concern with the child's intellectual development. In an emotionally healthy child, intellectual development and growth were presumed to follow spontaneously later. The daily kindergarten experiences were intended to provide a healthy environment of innocence where education was actively focused on personal interests, initiative, and individuality. Testing at this time and age was unknown.

In the late 1950's and into the next two decades, however, a flood of criticism infested the American education system. The Soviets had launched Sputnik and Americans felt that if they had been preceded into space, it was because their education had been inferior. Books like Why Johnny Can't Read (1955) were published to prove that accusation. As a consequence, the elementary school curriculum was pushed down; children were expected to learn

more at an early age; and the whole educational system professed to believe that an early start in academics would certainly lead to intellectual success in life. Curricula became heavy with content and standards were set up to measure the students' performance and progress.

Moreover, the civil rights movement of the 1960's abruptly brought early childhood education into the economic, political, and social spotlight. It was claimed that schools for African-American children were consistently inferior in quality to those of Caucasian children and that African-American children were poorly prepared for school. Mandatory busing and the Head Start legislation of 1964 were the response to the claims. Consequently, preschool education was looked upon as an asset to be subsidized by government funds. Government spending was accompanied by tests and reports to justify the program.

The trend toward earlier and earlier education of children continued unabated into the 1980's and was characterized by the "superbaby syndrome," the belief that a child is like an intellectual sponge, ready to absorb knowledge, even when still in the womb of the mother. According to this philosophy, the earlier a child is exposed to formal education the better (Elkind, 1987).

Today social, economic, and political reasons again exert a lot of pressure on elected officials to provide day care for children. The women's movement demands this care and the high rate of divorce, single parent homes, and women in the work force makes it necessary. As long as the child is supposed to cope with the separation from parents at an early age and has to adjust to baby sitters, day-care centers, or full-day nursery schools, why not add a little academic program to it? In this competitive society, a child needs any advantage he/she can get. If he/she falls behind his or her peers, the child will not be ready to compete academically when he/she enters kindergarten. Thus, compared to 30 percent in 1966, today almost half of the children between the age of three and five are enrolled in a preschool program (California State Department of Education (SDE), 1988).

True education reform will come about only when the reigning psychometric educational psychology is replaced by a developmentally appropriate one (Elkind, 1989). Perhaps developmental appropriateness and sound assessment procedures have been honored more in words than in deed.

Review of Literature

Today the professional literature on the education of young children is full of serious concerns about the assessment tools and procedures being used currently in the schools. Major concerns, complaints, and criticisms against standardized testing claim that these tests:

1. Give false information about the status of learning in the nation's schools
2. Are unfair to (or biased against) some kinds of student (e.g. minority or low-income family students)
3. Tend to corrupt the process of teaching and learning, often reducing teaching to mere preparation for testing
4. Focus time, energy, and attention on the simpler skills that are easily tested and away from higher-order thinking skills and creative endeavors. (Haney & Madaus, 1989, p. 684)

These concerns center on the increasing dependence on norm-referenced, standardized tests and their misuse, particularly with kindergarten children. During the last decade the pushing down of the grade curriculum to kindergarten level has been accompanied by more academic

tests (Meisels, 1989). In this regard the SDE Task Force Report (1988) says, "Standardized tests have changed during the last 20 years; in general, items that were scored as first grade items in 1960 are now scored as kindergarten items."

An increase in testing has also occurred because of the prevailing practice of testing children to determine entry into school and/or placement or retention in a grade such as two-year developmental kindergarten or prefirst grade (SDE, 1988; Graue & Shepard, 1989). According to the best judgement of professional educators, some readiness tests and other achievement tests are not valid nor reliable. The intended purpose of these tests is at most that of determining a child's relative preparation for a program rather than to classify, retain, or promote children (SDE, 1989; Graue & Shepard, 1989; Kamaii, 1990; May & Welch, 1984; Meisels, 1989; Peck, McCaig, and Sapp 1989; Shepard & Smith, 1988).

Many educators have expressed concern over the increased emphasis on academic skills in kindergarten and consequently on the use of standardized tests at this level. They fear that the academically "hurried child" may soon become the "burnout child" (Elkind, 1981, 1986, 1987) with

possible damaging psychological consequences for these children who are faced with too much too soon (Bridgman, 1988; Kamaii, 1990; Katz, 1988; Price, 1984; Raymond, 1989). Some of these educators have written editorials and have pleaded with parents urging them to protect their children from inappropriate curriculum and expectations (Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989; Elkind, 1987). This research contends that the new conception of the child as a competent learner is dictated more by social, political, and economic forces than by scientific research. Real harm can come from early formal education; short-term stress and long-term damage to motivation and self-esteem can result. They provide evidence that early introduction to academics or basic skills may undermine the child's development of the disposition and motivation to use the skills thus acquired (Elkind, 1981; Katz, 1988; Raymond, 1989).

Most early childhood educators believe that standardized testing is particularly inappropriate for young children because each child comes from a unique set of family experiences. Some children attend preschool or day-care centers; others remain home under the care of a family member or a baby sitter. Maturational and developmental factors are still very uneven and uncertain at this age.

Therefore, standardized or norm-referenced testing is inappropriate and will not give an accurate picture of the child. Only when the children begin to be exposed to the same learning opportunities, materials, and instructions, can an assessment of the child's relative ability to learn begin to be relevant (SDE, 1989).

Therefore, as reported by Kamaii (1990), the following organizations have called for an end to any achievement or standard test in grades kindergarten through second:

Association for Childhood Education International

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

National Association of State Boards of Education

National Association for the Education of Young Children

National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Council of Teachers of English

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

However, the major issue in the assessment of young children is not whether or not they should be assessed at all, but whether the assessment tools measure what is being learned and whether the assessment procedures are being followed appropriately (SDE, 1989):

> The State Department of Education does not require standardized, norm-referenced testing of young children. In fact, it recommends that standardized, norm-referenced tests not be used in kindergarten. The Department does not condone the use of any standardized or "readiness" test that leads to or results in the tracking of children . . . for the monitoring of their progress, the Department recommends the use of a variety of measures, including teacher observation of mastery of preacademic and academic skills, portfolios of children's drawings and experience stories, and parent input. (p. 13)

Common to all these studies is the demonstration that kindergarten children cannot be properly evaluated by standardized tests or by norm-referenced assessment tools. These studies also demonstrate that real harm can be derived from inappropriate assessment measures.

This becomes a very salient issue in regard to the formulation and implementation of assessment guidelines for kindergartens in the writer's school district. However, even as salient, is the fact that a philosophy of developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment for kindergarteners has been espoused by the California SDE Task Force which recommended "the use of a variety of measures, including teacher observation . . ., portfolios . . ., and parent input (SDE, 1989, p. 13).

Current early childhood education literature strongly recommends the abandonment of standarized tests and report

card grades as a means to evaluate students' progress and suggests a variety of alternate measures.

The writer believes that teachers (and parents) can be trained to better respond to the needs of young children by making use of developmentally appropriate assessment measures that fully respect the individual characteristics of each child. This was the main objective of the pilot program presented in this report.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The goal of this practicum was to set up a pilot program that would provide kindergarten teachers and school administrators with an appropriate and reliable assessment system for the evaluation of students enrolled in a developmentally appropriate curriculum class. The school where the writer teaches has four kindergarten classes that follow a developmentally appropriate program, but did not have approved ways of measuring progress of students. This pilot program was implemented in the writer's kindergarten class to focus on this goal.

Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation

The specific goal of this practicum was to set up a reliable assessment system in the writer's kindergarten classroom to evaluate progress of children enrolled in a developmentally appropriate program. As a pilot program, when the evaluation system was put in place it was also intended to become a model for other kindergarten teachers to follow. The following objectives were considered appropriate for the successful achievement of these goals:

Objective 1

The writer will assist the school district personnel in devising an assessment tool that measures what the children have learned in a developmentally appropriate program.

Objective 2

Parents will be led to understand and appreciate the value of the portfolio approach to assessment.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

In the implementation of this pilot program that extended over a period of time and involved several variables, it was necessary to make provisions for unexpected occurrences and events. In order to take due notice of any atypical event, the writer kept a journal and recorded any deviation from the expected goals and objectives. The process provided a means of monitoring progress or non-progress of this practicum and offered the writer new insights into the multitude of different approaches to the evaluation process. Most importantly, such monitoring kept the writer on focus throughout the project and prevented any major obstacle from interfering with the completion of this project.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Before entering into a discussion and evaluation of the possible solutions offered by the available literature on the problem, it is of utmost importance to have clear understanding of the difference between standardized testing and curriculum based evaluation of children. A standardized test is used to obtain evaluations of a very specific type. The test evaluates children against prescribed expectations of achievements children are expected to obtain at a particular age or in a particular grade. A curriculum based evaluation, on the other hand, is much broader and is designed to evaluate children as to what they have been learning, without any regard to their age or the grade in which they are enrolled. In this assessment process the teacher looks at what has been learned, what needs to be learned, and how children are learning. The information gained through the curriculum based evaluation process is used by the teacher to design instructional goals and objectives for the individuals (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). The assessment of children enhances teachers' competence as

evaluators of student progress. Through observation, writing anecdotal records, and collecting performance samples of children's work, teachers are able to evaluate and demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the students.

How should teachers assess the behavior and progress of children? For Strickland and Morrow (1989), daily observation in the classroom provides the best setting, since assessment and instruction can be linked to provide tangible evidence of progress. Children can be interviewed to ascertain what they have learned; records of literary activities, checklists, and taped activities can also provide evidence of learning and demonstrate growth.

Elkind (1989) suggests the use of a portfolio system for assessing progress of children. Usually, he says, this is done by documenting the work a child has done over a period of time, a portfolio that includes all of his or her writing, drawing, math explorations and so on. In looking through such a portfolio, a teacher, a parent, a principal or administrator can get a good idea of the quality of work that the child is capable of doing and of his/her progress over a period of time. Elkind recommends, however, that teachers be trained to know what to look for in a child's

work and, most of all, that the curriculum meets the child's needs and not that the child be made to fit the curriculum.

Schultz (1989), while reviewing the different practices of testing and methods used around the country, points out that there are presently a variety of efforts to use teacher's observations, samples of student work, and student performance in a classroom setting as bases for documenting growth in different areas of content and skills. By building a richer picture of the strengths and interests of individual children, he says, teachers can use these varied assessments to plan different classroom strategies and to inform parents and administrators of the progress of their children. Schultz (1989) also points out that several recent reports have called for the creation of ungraded early childhood education units that include kindergarten and primary grades. As an example of the implementation of this new outlook, Schultz cites that British Columbia started such a new approach in all schools in the province beginning in the Fall of 1989.

Haney and Madaus (1989) readily admit that, as the quantity of standardized testing in the U.S. schools has risen, complaints about these tests have increased in volume and intensity. They cite as an example the National

Education Association which passed a resolution encouraging the elimination of group standardized intelligence, aptitude, and achievement tests and suggesting as an alternative to standardized, norm-referenced tests the professional judgement of teachers, samples of student works, contracts with students, interviews, teacher-made tests, and criterion-referenced tests. They conclude, however, that although evaluation tools such as life performances, products, teachers' judgement, and school grades have a long history in education, what is needed is a refusal to accept bondage to any single technological tool, no matter how useful or appealing it may be in a particular instance. Haney and Madaus recommend, therefore, a thoughtful selection of different kinds and mixes of assessments, each tailored to achieve different purposes.

Freeman and Hatch (1989), in a study of report cards from a stratified sample of Ohio public schools, maintain that, although the State mandates that school districts must send out a pupil-progress indicator (report card) and maintain a record of the student's progress in kindergarten in a cumulative record folder (portfolio), the general expectations for kindergarteners reflect a strong behaviorists orientation and seemed to devalue the influence

of maturationists and interactionists in the education of young children.

Notwithstanding the philosophical and psychological difficulties of developmentally appropriate curriculums and assessments, Price (1990) believes that children will be most successful in the early primary program if their teachers use extensive individual assessments including teacher's observations and parental input. The beauty of this method of assessment is its natural, informal, and daily occurrence. But, Price (1990) states this type of assessment can occur only when teachers have been trained to observe children as they work with them and when there are small groups to observe.

Bredekamp and Shepard (1989) are primarily concerned about how best to protect children from inappropriate school expectations, practices, and policies. In this regard they recommend alternative assessment instruments and procedures such as oral tapes of children's stories or reading progress and portfolios of students' writing and artwork be used instead of standardized tests. They also recommend an increase in the use of systematic observation of teachers on students' performance and the systematic documentation of various sources of evidence of children's progress for use

in curriculum planning, evaluation, and reporting to parents, principal, and administrative officials. The use of measures that assess not only the students' weaknesses, but particularly their strengths are also recommended.

Flood and Lapp (1989) report how a comparison report can show teachers, parents and students as well as principals how much progress students have made in reading. This comparison report includes grades, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced tests and informal measures like teacher's observations from the beginning of the year to the end or from one time to a later time. This portfolio might contain information from standardized tests as well as from samples (tapes) from the child's reading assignments, participation in voluntary reading programs, self-reports, and samples of the material that the child has been reading.

Matthews (1990) offers the experience of the Orange County Public Schools of Orlando, Florida, in the change from a computer management system to a portfolio assessment system in the reading program of the district. The actual implementation of the portfolio assessment system was achieved by collecting audiotapes of the students' reading, keeping records of all the books read by the students, selecting writing samples, and so forth.

Valencia (1990) also offers a portfolio approach to classroom reading assessment. A portfolio approach, Valencia says, is based on authentic records of students' reading tasks, texts, and contexts. It is an on-going process and a multi-dimensional assessment of a wide range of cognitive processes, affective responses, and literary activities; and, it provides for active and collaborative reflection by both the teacher and the student.

Herrell (1989) believes that assessment in early childhood programs should be on-going and authentic. By authentic assessment in early childhood education programs, Herrell means that it should consist of the actual observation of the children in their classroom activities or the one-on-one interaction between teacher and child to ascertain whether or not the child has achieved certain stages of development or understanding. She suggests that early childhood educators have the options of keeping the documentation of a child's developmental milestones, anecdotal records, and/or a portfolio of his/her school work. Periodic dated entries into the portfolio along with the developmental milestones checklists and anecdotal records will fully document the child's progress and serve as valuable tools for parent conferences. Herrell (1989)

also recommends the use of photographs to document the child's competencies in such areas as block construction and dramatic play.

Solution Plan

The writer believes that a solution to the problem of the lack of reliable tools to measure progress in a developmentally appropriate curriculum class would be for the teacher to use the portfolio approach, which is an on-going assessment of a child's progress that includes, but is not limited to, teacher and parent observation along with samples of the child's work collected over the whole school year. She implemented the portfolio approach by having a folder for each student that contained documentation for each child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and progress.

The writer believes that this assessment method can work because the portfolio approach gives an objective overview of a child's achievement over a 12-week period, achievement that can be confirmed and substantiated also by teachers' and parents' observations. Further confirmation and substantiation of the validity of this assessment method can be obtained by a year-long on-going application of the process.

Steps and Calendar

To achieve the stated goal, the writer implemented the following calendar.

Week 1 Prepared a file (Portfolio) for each student.

Week 2 Began to collect samples of student's work selected by teacher and/or student.

Samples of: drawings; writings; math.

Anecdotal records: teacher observations; parental input.

Week 3 Administered school district K/1 Assessment. This tool assessed language arts; math; and social/emotional development and placed results in Portfolio.

Week 4 Collected on-going samples of students' work and recorded social/emotional milestones.

Week 5 Added audiotapes for language component. Areas for improvement in use of tapes:

1. Background noise on tape needs to be eliminated so tapes can be heard better.
2. Allow for a break between students on tape so specific speakers can be more readily found.

Week 6 Added photos, especially of math, art, block construction and dramatic play.

1. Photos were very appreciated by parents at conference time.
2. A family donated decorative photo holders for each student that added a nice touch to the Portfolios by displaying the photos in an organized way.

Week 7 Held formal parent/teacher/student conference using contents of Portfolio as bases for addressing strengths and weaknesses of each student. However, contrary to what was originally planned, the writer did not feel the need to invite Administrator(s) to the conference.

Week 8 Evaluated feedback from parent responses (oral) regarding Portfolio approach to assessment. One father's favorable response to the portfolio was, "This sure beats N's and S's."

Week 9 Continued to make additions to Portfolios. Informal conferences with parents and administrators were held as needed.

Week 10 Made new additions to Portfolios. Informal conferences with parents and administrators were held as needed.

Week 11 Made further additions to Portfolios. Informal conferences with parents and administrators were held as needed.

Week 12 Reviewed Portfolio contents to measure progress of students over past 12 weeks.

The on-going process of collecting samples of students' work and other relevant material will continue throughout the school year. Conferences including the parents, teacher, and student will also continue formally and informally as needed.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION PLANS

The specific goal of this practicum was to set up a reliable assessment system in the writer's kindergarten classroom to evaluate progress of children enrolled in a developmentally appropriate program. As a pilot program, when the evaluation system was put in place it was also intended to become a model for other kindergarten teachers to follow. The following objectives were considered appropriate for the successful achievement of these goals:

Objective 1

The writer will assist the school district personnel in devising an assessment tool that measures what the children have learned in a developmentally appropriate program.

Objective 2

Parents will be led to understand and appreciate the value of the portfolio approach to assessment.

To meet Objective 1, the writer assisted school district personnel in devising an assessment tool that measures what the children have learned in a developmentally appropriate program. This assessment tool called "K/1 Assessment" is included in this report as Appendix A. The

evaluation of the tool by early childhood professionals is in the very early stages. So far, the only suggestion for improvement has been to add the simple statement, "Administered by _____."

Since the implementation of this curriculum based assessment tool, the writer has found what she believes is a more suitable and workable Social-Emotional Growth instrument. This instrument is cited as Appendix B.

Objective 2 was met by the 100% participation of the 26 families at parent/child/teacher conferences where the contents of the portfolio were used as the basis for addressing the strengths and weaknesses of each student. All parents were favorably impressed by the tangible proof of their children's progress as shown by the portfolio approach to assessment. Their feelings were best summarized by a father who stated: "This sure beats N's and S's."

In summary, the writer is pleased by the results obtained through the implementation of the portfolio approach to assessment of kindergarten students' progress. She believes that a visual and tangible record of each student's achievement over a period of time is preferable to a letter grade to indicate satisfactory or unsatisfactory achievements.

An unanticipated outcome of the implementation of the portfolio approach was the ease of and pleasure by which the writer could demonstrate each student's progress to parents, administrators, and students themselves, and obtain from them their approval, support, and cooperation in the use of this assessment approach.

Therefore, the writer:

1. wholeheartedly recommends the use of the portfolio approach for the assessment of students' progress in kindergarten.
2. will continue to assist the school district in its implementation of the portfolio approach by in-servicing teachers, parents, and administrators in the implementation of this assessment method.

Recommendations

It is this writer's recommendation that teachers, who have adopted a curriculum based evaluation method for assessment of students' growth, be always attentive to the fact that adaptations and improvements may be needed and at times necessary.

In an effort to better assess student progress, this writer has greatly benefited from her own experience with portfolios and from the literature on the subject. For

example, an article entitled "What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio" (Paulson et al., 1991) offers some thoughtful guidelines to help educators implement the portfolio assessment method and encourage self-directed learning. Another article entitled "Put Portfolios To The Test" (Vavrus, 1990) endeavors to answer everything one needs to know about this powerful assessment tool, including what goes in it, how and when to select the material, and how to evaluate the portfolios.

Nor should a teacher be afraid to read and study other innovative assessment alternatives. For example, in an article by Mara Krechevsky (1991), "Project Spectrum" is offered as an innovative assessment that incorporates the portfolio method, but expands on it to include evaluation of a variety of children's strengths, such as music, visual arts, movement, etc.

As the curriculum based assessment approach is widely implemented, reports on its results and on its various applications will become more available every day. Awareness of and openness to the new available data will enhance the teacher's day to day implementation of this exciting new way of assessing growth and performance of students.

Dissemination

As has been indicated, the writer has participated in the formulation of a district-wide assessment tool (see Appendix A) for K/1 based on the portfolio approach to assessment. She has also shared this paper on the subject with the Coordinator of Early Childhood Education at California State University, Fresno, Dr. Doris Smith; with the Assistant Professor in Reading/Language Arts at University of Washington, Seattle, Dr. Shelia Valencia; and with Dr. Gary Duke, member of the California State Leadership Academy.

The writer has also given in-service presentations on the portfolio approach to assessment of students' progress to K-8 school staff in her district, to the Child Development class at a Community College, to a district-wide parent education day, to pre-school teachers in the district, and will continue to in-service all interested parties.

In summary, the pilot program allowed the writer to provide an appropriate and reliable assessment tool for evaluation of kindergarteners who are enrolled in a developmentally appropriate curriculum class. Specifically, the objective of the writer was to implement the portfolio

approach (and related curriculum based assessment tools) to evaluate progress in a kindergarten that uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum. In this way she was able to achieve a reliable and appropriate tool to evaluate kindergarteners who are enrolled in a developmentally appropriate curriculum classroom to the satisfaction of parents/students/teacher and administrators.

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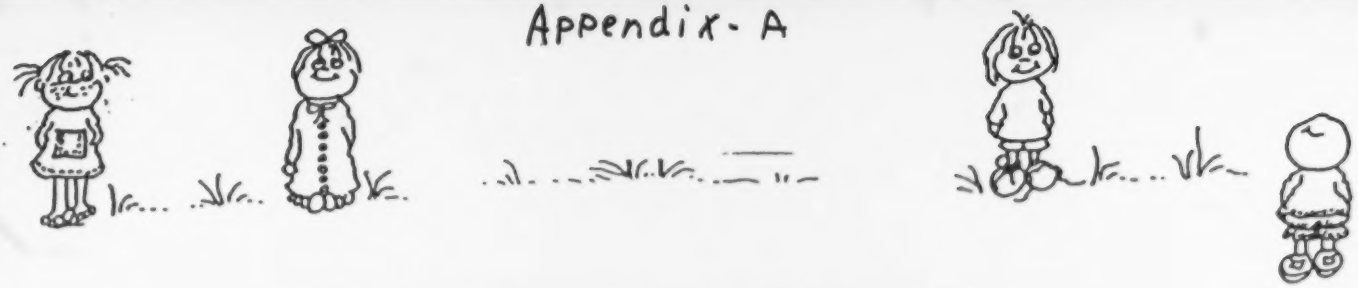
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 ASSESSMENT 1990-91
LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS
AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Appendix - A



MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

K/1 ASSESSMENT 1990-91

LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT

Today the professional literature on the education of young children is full of serious concerns about the assessment tools and procedures being used currently in our schools.

Dr. Honig, California State Superintendent of Schools, in a 1989 interview with Judith Brown, the president of California Kindergarten Association, said:

> *'We have to rely more on teacher judgement with a portfolio approach . . .'*
>
> *'We should keep a portfolio on each child to know their strengths and weaknesses and to catch them when they are falling off.'*

Elkind (1989) suggests the use of a portfolio system for assessing progress of children. This is done by documenting the work a child has done over a period of time. A portfolio includes writing, drawing and math samples. In looking through such a portfolio, a teacher, parent and administrator can get a good idea of the student's progress over a period of time.

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Philosophical and Practical Implications."
Phi Delta Kappan, 113-117.

SUGGESTED PORTFOLIO SAMPLES

LANGUAGE

- Oral language sample recorded by adult. (1 per quarter)
- Self-generated writing sample (1 per quarter)
- Any other collected writings . . . . children's notes, lists, environmental copying
- Anecdotal records
- Photos of child's work

MATHEMATICS

- Pattern strip
- Number writing
- Geometric design (patterned paper shapes)
- Directed drawings (Using shapes)
- Cut/Paste sorting (seeds, macaroni)
- Seriation (3 Bears, Billy Goats Gruff, leaves)
- Individual graphs
- Number (pictorial representation)
- Photos
- Anecdotal records

ITEMS NEEDED FOR TESTING

LANGUAGE:

Drawing paper
Crayons-pencil
*Sequence picture set
Children's storybook
Interesting picture (your choice)

MATHEMATICS:

Explorations or Math Their Way "junk boxes"
Pattern blocks
Unifix cubes (optional)
*Design cards
*1-10 number mat
Beans
*3 straws of various lengths
Balance scale

**These items will be provided for you.*

LANGUAGE ARTS

EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

1. READING READINESS

   A. Ask child to write his/her name.

   B. Turn paper over. Ask child to draw a picture of himself/herself.

   C. "Tell me about your picture and I will write it down for you."
   (record and date response on drawing)
   "Dime algo sobre tu dibujo y yo lo escribiré."

   D. Sequencing. "Please put these pictures in an order that makes sense to you." (Use whichever set you like)
   "Por favor, pon estos dibujos en orden que tengan razón (sentido) para tí."

   E. "Tell me what happened here" *"Dime lo que pasó aquí."*

2. BOOK SKILLS

   A. Observe child's behavior in a book activity.

   NOTE. . .

   Position of book

   Turning of pages

   Child's enjoyment of activity

   Verbal responses

   Rate child's wholistic performance on a 1 - 5 scale. (5 representing the highest)

   1 2 3 4 5

3. WRITING READINESS

   A. Using a picture of your own choice have child write about what s/he sees.

   "Please write something about this picture. Tell me what you wrote."
   "*Por favor, escribe algo sobre este dibujo. Dime lo que escribiste."*

NOTE . . .

Scribble writing, mock letters, alphabet letters or inventive spelling

Rate child's wholistic performance on a 1 - 5 scale. (5 representing the highest)

1 2 3 4 5

4. In your professional judgement rate child's performance of the overall language component. Review test performance and collected data in portfolio, include listening and speaking skills.

1 2 3 4 5

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

K/1 Language Arts Assessment

FALL Date/Comments		EXIT SKILLS Reading Readiness		SPRING Date/Comments
	/1	1A. Writes name	/1	
	/1	1B. Produces drawing of self	/1	
	/1	1C. Verbalizes a statement about drawing	/1	
	/1	1D. Puts pictures in logical order	/1	
	/1	1E. Logical explanation is given for picture order	/1	
		BOOK SKILLS		
	/5	2A. Observance of child in book activity.	/5	
		WRITING READINESS		
	/5	3A. Ability to write and interpret written text in response to a picture.	/5	
	/5	4. Overall review of test performance portfolio materials.	/5	
	/20	TOTAL	/20	

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 Language Arts Assessment

Otoño Fecha/Comentarios		DESTREZAS DE SALIDA Reading Readiness		Primavera Fecha/Comentarios
	☐/1 1A	Escribe su nombre	☐/1	
	☐/1 1B.	Produce dibujo de sí mismo	☐/1	
	☐/1 1C.	Expresa en palabras una declaracion sobre su dibujo.	☐/1	
	☐/1 1D.	Pone los retratos (dibujos) en orden lógica	☐/1	
	☐/1 1E.	Da explicación lógica tocante la orden de los retratos (dibujos).	☐/1	
		DESTREZAS DE LIBROS		
	☐/5 2A.	Observación del niño/niña en actividades de libros.	☐/5	
		PREPARACION PARA ESCRITURA		
	☐/5 3A.	La habilidad de escribir y interpretar el texto escrito que corresponde a un retrato (dibujo).	☐/5	
	☐/5 4.	Revista de la obra total sobre el desempeño de los exámenes y la materia de la cartera.	☐/5	
	☐/20	TOTAL	☐/20	

AB:aml
09/18/90

MATHEMATICS

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1. Sorting

Use Exploration or Math Their Way "junk boxes" or pattern blocks. Note material child chooses.

A. "Please sort these." *"Por favor, separa" (sortea) éstos.*
B. "Please sort these in another way." *"Por favor, separa éstos de otra manera".*

2. Patterning

Use Explorations or Math Their Way "junk boxes", pattern blocks, or unifix cubes. Teacher lays out an AB pattern.

A. Reproduce - "Can you make this pattern, please?"
"¿Puedas hacer este patrón, por favor?"
B. Extend - "Can you show me what comes next?"
" ¿Puedes mostrarme la forma que sigue después de ésta?"
C. Create - "Can you make a different pattern?"
" ¿ Puedes hacer un patrón diferente?"

3. Geometry

Use pattern blocks and design cards. Child or teacher chooses a design card.

A. Superimpose - "Put the blocks on the card to cover the design like a puzzle." *"Pon estas píezas en la carta para cubrir el diseño como un rompecabezas."*
B. Reproduce - "Please make the design again, but make it on the table this time." *"Por favor, haz este diseño otra vez, pero hazlo en la mesa esta vez."*
C. Create - "Can you make a different design?" *" ¿Puedes hacer un diseño diferente?"*

4. Number

A. Counting - "Please count for me." *"Por favor, cuenta para mí."* (Allow child to count as far as possible to teacher's discretion and record)
B. Naming Numbers:

Teacher points to number on number mat in the following order and child names number:

1, 2, 4, 3, 5, (1 pt.)

6, 8, 7, 10, 9 (1 pt.)

C. Demonstrate concept of number -

"Here's the number 3." *"Aquí está el número tres. (3). "*

Please put that many beans on the number."
"Por favor, pon el mismo número de frijoles que enseña el número."

Repeat substituting the numbers 5, then 8.

5. **Measurement**

A. Seriation - "Can you put these straws in order by size such as largest to smallest?" *"Puedes poner estos popotes en orden de tamaño desde el más grande hasta el más pequeño."*
"Please show me the longest" *"Por favor, muéstrame el más largo."*
"Please show me the shortest". *"Por favor, muéstrame el más corto."*

B. Weight - Observe child's behavior with balance scale. Note child's attempts to balance objects and child's recording of information. Rate child's wholistic performance on a 1-3 scale.(3 representing the highest)

1 2 3

6. In your professional judgement, rate child's performance of the overall math component. Review test performance and collected data in portfolio.

1 2 3 4 5

25 PTS. TOTAL

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 Mathematics Assessment

FALL Date/Comments		EXIT SKILLS Sorting		SPRING Date/Comments
_____	/1	1A. Sort items	/1	_____
_____	/1	1B. Sort in another way	/1	_____
		Patterning		
_____	/1	2A. Reproduce pattern	/1	_____
_____	/1	2B. Extend pattern	/1	_____
_____	/1	2C. Create pattern	/1	_____
		Geometry		
_____	/1	3A. Superimpose design	/1	_____
_____	/1	3B. Reproduce design	/1	_____
_____	/1	3C. Create design	/1	_____
		Number		
_____	/1	4A. Orally count to twenty	/1	_____
_____	/2	4B. Name numbers to ten	/2	_____
_____	/3	4C. Demonstrate concept of number	/3	_____
		Measurement		
_____	/1	5A. Order by size	/1	_____
_____	/1	Identify longest	/1	_____
_____	/1	Identify shortest	/1	_____
_____	/3	5B. Balance scale use	/3	_____
_____	/5	6. Overall review of test performance and portfolio materials.	/5	_____
_____	/25	TOTAL	/25	

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 Mathematics Assessment

Otoño Fecha/Comentarios		EXIT SKILLS		Primavera Fecha/Comentarios
		<u>Sortear</u>		
_____	/1	1A. Sortear artículos	/1	_____
_____	/1	1B. Sortear de otra manera	/1	_____
		<u>Formar Patrones</u>		
_____	/1	2A. Reproducir (duplicar) un patrón	/1	_____
_____	/1	2B. Extender un Patrón	/1	_____
_____	/1	2C. Hacer un patrón original	/1	_____
		<u>Geometría</u>		
_____	/1	3A. Sobreponer un diseño	/1	_____
_____	/1	3B. Reproducir (duplicar) un diseño	/1	_____
_____	/1	3C. Hacer un diseño original	/1	_____
		<u>Número</u>		
_____	/1	4A. Contar oralmente hasta vente	/1	_____
_____	/2	4B. Nombrar números hasta diez.	/2	_____
_____	/3	4C. Demóstrar el concepto de cada número	/3	_____
		<u>Medidas</u>		
_____	/1	5A. Orden por tamaño	/1	_____
_____	/1	Identifica el más largo	/1	_____
_____	/1	Identifica el más corto	/1	_____
_____	/3	5B. Uso de Balanza	/3	_____
_____	/5	6. Revista de la obra total sobre el desempeño de los exámenes y la materia de la cartera.	/5	_____
_____	/25	TOTAL	/25	_____

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 Social/Emotional Development Assessment

Milestone Date/Comments					Milestone Date/Comments
_____	1.	Social Skills with Peers	2.	Social Skills with Adults/In Groups	_____
_____	A.	Usually observes play of other	A.	Accepts situations rather than ask for adult help.	_____
_____	B.	Usually plays alone or is involved in parallel play.	B.	Communicates with adults primarily to get help	_____
_____	C.	Is developing cooperative play skills.	C.	Speaks spontaneously and freely with adults.	_____
_____	D.	Socially self confident. Plays effectively with other children.	D.	Participates in group activities and conversation.	_____
_____	E.	Has well-developed skills of leadership and cooperation in play.	E.	Is sensitive to and articulate about the needs of others.	_____
_____	F.	Can inhibit his/her own inappropriate behavior through use of constructive action.	F.	Is able to accept suggestions from others and implement them.	_____

Source: Tulare Public Schools

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
K/1 DESARROYO/SOCIAL/EMOCIONAL
Assessment

Milestone Fecha/Commentarios					Milestone Fecha/Commentarios
_____ _____	1.	Destrezas Sociales con compañeros	2.	Destrezas Sociales con Adultos/Grupos	_____ _____
_____	A.	Siempre observa juego de otros	A.	Acepta situaciones en lugar de pedir ayuda de los adultos.	_____
_____ _____ _____	B.	Siempre juega solo ó se envuelve en juegos paralelos (semejantes)	B.	Comunica con adultos simplemente para conseguir ayuda.	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____	C.	Está desarrollando destrezas de juegos cooperativos	C.	Habla espontáneamente y libremente con adultos.	_____ _____
_____	D.	Socialmente confidente en sí mismo. Juega efectivamente con otros niños	D.	Participa en actividades de grupo y conversa	_____
_____	E.	Tiene destrezas de liderato y cooperación bien desarrolladas en el juego.	E.	Es sensible a las necesidades de otros y se expresa sobre ésto.	_____
_____	F.	Puede impedir su propio comportamiento impropio por medio de uso de acción constructiva.	F.	Puede aceptar sugerencia de otros y realizarlas.	_____

Source: Tulare Public Schools

CHAPTER 1 IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS

The information listed below will be used to determine which students are eligible for Chapter 1 services in Kindergarten and First Grade. You can also use this information to inform parents of their child's progress.

KINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS

LANGUAGE ARTS	total score of 9 or less
MATHEMATICS	total score of 12 or less

FIRST GRADE PARTICIPANTS

LANGUAGE ARTS	total score of 14 or less
MATHEMATICS	total score of 18 or less

PARENT NOTIFICATION

A letter will be given to parents during the first conference to inform parents of their child's eligibility for Chapter 1 services. At that time you can let parents know which type of services they receive (i.e. instructional aide or resource teacher who provides services over and above your instruction.) You will also be able to make suggestions to parents on how they can enhance their child's instruction at home. (See sample copy of letter.

Helping Youth Is Our Business

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PHONE: (209) 675-4500

1902 HOWARD ROAD, MADERA, CALIFORNIA 93637

FAX: (209) 675-1186

SAMPLE

To the Parents of _____

Federal law requires us to inform parents of their child's progress, participation, and methods by which parents can complement their child's instruction.*

STUDENT PROGRESS

Your child's report card reflects your child's progress at this grade level. Other measures are also used to determine your child's progress such as District Proficiencies, K-1 Assessment, and standardized tests.

CHAPTER 1 PARTICIPANT

_____ Language Arts

_____ Mathematics

Identification as a Chapter 1 participant is determined by your child's latest score on the CTBS test or the K-1 Assessment. Those students scoring below the 50th percentile are eligible for Chapter 1 services. Your child's teacher will discuss these services with you.

PARENT SUPPORT

Ways in which parents can complement their child's instruction.

_____

_____

_____

PUBLIC MEETING

Interested parents are invited to attend a Public Meeting for Chapter 1/SCE on Thursday, November 15, at 7:00 p.m. or Friday, November 16, at 10:30 a.m. in the MUSD Boardroom.

_____

* Public Law 100-297

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CHAPTER I

PARTICIPANT LIST
KINDERGARTEN

NAME OF STUDENT	LANGUAGE ARTS FALL 9 or less	LANGUAGE ARTS SPRING 14 or less	MATHEMATICS FALL 12 or less	MATHEMATICS SPRING 18 or less

TEACHER: _____

CHAPTER I

PARTICIPANT LIST
1ST GRADE

NAME OF STUDENT	LANGUAGE ARTS 14 or less	MATHEMATICS 18 or less

TEACHER: _____

Appendix B

DOCUMENTING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH

DOCUMENTING SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Anecdotal records are a rich source on information regarding a young child's social and emotional growth. This development can be seen as a movement away from dependence upon the adult caregiver or teacher toward becoming more able to cope independently. The following continuum can be used to record this growth.

Amount of adult help and direction needed on a scale of 1 - 5. One meaning only with the help and direction of an adult progressing to five, meaning without any help or direction from an adult.

Please date observation	1	2	3	4	5
Self-awareness					
describes personal likes and dislikes					
expresses interest in own body					
expresses interest in products of classroom activities					
Independence					
can separate from parent/ caregiver					
can ask for help					
can complete simple tasks					
can choose classroom activities					
Self Confidence					
can adjust to new situations					
shows pride in accomplishments					
Moral Reasoning					
is aware of what he/she should/should not do					
views punishment as a consequence of breaking the rules					
can consider the motive of another person as as explanation of his/her behavior					
Self-control					
can listen to others					
can take turns and share					
can follow a few, clear, consistent rules					
can inhibit impulse or aggressive reactions and use words to explain feelings instead					

DOCUMENTATION OF SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL GROWTH (Continued)

Please date observation	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperation					
can work on a task with 1 or more other children for approximately 20 minutes					
can engage in a game with simple rules					
Empathy					
can appreciate differences in others					
can adapt own needs to needs of others					
can offer comfort to a friend in need					
Problem Solving					
Can offer reasons/alternatives for actions					
can use words to deal with conflicts					

Adapted from works by Biber, Barbara et al, 1977; Elkind, David and Weiner, Irving, 1972; Hazen, Nancy et al, 1982; Thomas, Murray, 1979 and Wadsworth, Barry, 1984.